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Former Walla Walla District Chief of Construction honored

Walla Walla, Wash., -- Gary F. Willard, retired chief of the Construction Division received from LTC William E. Bulen, Jr., commander of the Walla Walla District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the District's highest award on Friday, June 23.

Willard was inducted into the District's Gallery of Distinguished Civilian Employees during an award ceremony to highlight employee contributions to the Corps. His photo and a narrative will be permanently displayed at the District's headquarters building along with past inductees.

Willard started with the Walla Walla District in 1962 as an engineer in training after graduating from the University of Idaho. He completed the training program and was assigned to the John Day resident office in 1964. In 1966 he was promoted to a supervisory position at Dworshak Resident Office and remained there until the completion of Dworshak Dam. He then served in the Lower Snake River Resident Office as chief of the Construction Branch from 1975 to 1988. This included a stint at Little Goose Dam during installation of the additional turbine generator units.

Willard moved to Walla Walla when the Lower Snake River Area Office closed in 1988. He was selected as the permanent chief of the Construction Division in 1990 and retired in April 1997 with 35 years of exemplary federal service.

Willard distinguished himself during his long career by the relationships he developed with the construction industry. While he established a reputation for demanding strict compliance with contract provisions, he was also highly respected for his integrity, fairness and consistency in his dealings with contractors. During the last 10 years of his career, he became a pioneer in partnering in construction contracts.

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Willard currently lives with his wife Anna Marie, in Plummer, Idaho, and continues to support and serve his local community, serving on the Benewah County Planning and Zoning Committee.

The Walla Walla District staff is responsible for the development of federal water resources in a 107,000-square-mile region. The District's boundaries generally follow the Snake River drainage in six states – Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming. The Walla Walla District is one of five in the Corps' Northwestern Division, co-located in Portland, Ore., and Omaha, Neb.

The 600-member District staff is active in the planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance of water resources projects for flood control, navigation and other purposes. The District also provides environmental restoration support at the Bunker Hill Smelter Superfund Site near Kellogg, Idaho.

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